

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 000854

SIPDIS

DEPT. FOR NEA AND EUR

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TAGS: PREL MARR MOPS IR IT IRAOI FREEDOM NATO

SUBJECT: IRAQ: IRAN WOULD ACCEPT UN-SANCTIONED WAR IN IRAQ,
KHATEMI TELLS BERLUSCONI

CLASSIFIED BY: POL M/C TOM COUNTRYMAN, REASONS 1.5 (B,D)

**¶11. (C) SUMMARY: IRAN WOULD NOT OBJECT TO MILITARY ACTION TO
DEPOSE SADDAM -- PROVIDED IT IS UN-SANCTIONED, IRANIAN
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PRESIDENT KHATAMI HAS TOLD PM BERLUSCONI. KHATAMI'S VIEWS
WERE DELIVERED TO BERLUSCONI BY HIS BROTHER, PARLIAMENTARY
VP KHATAMI, IN A FEB. 26 MEETING. KHATAMI'S MESSAGE
UNDERSCORES IRAN'S STRONG CONCERN WITH "UNILATERAL" ACTION
AGAINST SADDAM AND INSISTS THAT IRAN PLAY A ROLE IN
POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION. KHATAMI'S VISIT, WHICH
GENERATED LITTLE PRESS COVERAGE, ALSO FEATURED CALLS ON
PARLIAMENTARY CHAMBER PRESIDENT CASINI AND THE POPE. END
SUMMARY.

**¶12. (C) MFA GULF AFFAIRS OFFICE DIRECTOR PROVIDED US LATE FEB.
27 WITH AN ORAL SUMMARY OF THE OFFICIAL MESSAGE KHATAMI-FRERE
HAD DELIVERED TO PM BERLUSCONI THE DAY BEFORE. IN ASKING FOR
THE APPOINTMENT WITH BERLUSCONI, THE IRANIANS HAD MADE CLEAR
THAT THE IRANIAN ENVOY WOULD BE BRINGING A MESSAGE FROM
PRESIDENT KHATAMI.**

¶13. (C) PRESIDENT KHATAMI'S MESSAGE INDICATED THAT:

- IRAN WOULD BE AGREEABLE TO MILITARY ACTION TO DISARM
SADDAM, PROVIDED IT OCCURRED UNDER AUSPICES OF A UN
RESOLUTION.

- HOWEVER, IRAN WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE DANGERS TO REGIONAL
STABILITY POSED BY DISARMAMENT ACCOMPLISHED VIA "UNILATERAL
ACTION." UNILATERAL ACTION WOULD NEITHER CREATE A MORE
STABLE IRAQ NOR RENDER THE REGION MORE SECURE.

- IF SADDAM'S DISARMAMENT OCCURRED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE
UN, IRAN "WOULD NOT FAIL TO GIVE ITS CONSTRUCTIVE SUPPORT,"
ESPECIALLY REGARDING RECONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES. SUCH
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ACTIVITIES WOULD BE ABLE TO OCCUR IN A CLIMATE OF TRUST AND
COOPERATION WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES.

- IRAN WAS AWARE OF THE U.S. NEED TO MAKE SURE SADDAM DID NOT
POSE A FUTURE THREAT; BUT IRAN NEEDED A GUARANTEE THAT IT
WOULD NOT BE EXCLUDED FROM POSTWAR SCENARIOS.

**¶14. (C) KHATAMI-FRERE ALSO INFORMED BERLUSCONI THAT HIS
BROTHER PLANNED TO SEND VICE PRESIDENT NABAVEH(SP) TO BERLIN,
PARIS AND ANKARA NEXT WEEK TO CONSULT AND PRESS IRAN'S VIEWS
OF THE SITUATION.**

**¶15. (U) THE OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT INDICATED THAT KHATAMI
HAD ALSO CONVEYED AN INVITATION FOR BERLUSCONI TO VISIT
TEHRAN. IT ALSO ELLIPTICALLY NOTED IRAN'S HOPE THAT ITALY'S
UPCOMING EU PRESIDENCY WOULD FURTHER IMPROVE IRANIAN-EU
RELATIONS, INCLUDING STRONGER ECONOMIC TIES.**

**¶16. (SBU) KHATAMI STRESSED THE SAME ELEMENTS IN A SHORT
MEETING WITH PARLIAMENTARY CHAMBER PRESIDENT CASINI FEB. 27,
EMPHASIZING IRAN'S CONCERN OVER THE POTENTIAL OF UNILATERAL
U.S. MILITARY ACTION TO DESTABILIZE THE BROADER REGION AND
URGING A GREATER FOCUS ON THE POST-WAR SITUATION, ACCORDING
TO CASINI'S DIPLOMATIC ADVISOR. IN RESPONSE, CASINI URGED
IRAN TO PURSUE A MODERATE LINE ON ANY POSSIBLE MILITARY
ACTION; HE ALSO PRESSED KHATAMI TO STOP SUPPORTING HEZBOLLAH
AND SIMILAR TERROR GROUPS AND TO CURTAIL ITS NUCLEAR
PROGRAMS. KHATAMI REPORTEDLY ALSO CALLED ON THE POPE FEB. 27.
SEMBLER**

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